

April 2, 1963

Mrs. Margaret Wightman  
11 Tring Avenue, Ealing  
London, W.5, England

Dear Mrs. Wightman:

Thank you for your letter of March 25. We have been rapidly developing a program within this department that would entail very extensive use of computation facilities, and if this continues to materialize, your experience would indeed be very pertinent. We have in mind a number of studies, some of them quite explicitly genetical, others relating to the ancillary instrumentation interests of the members of the department including such matters as the use of computers for the analysis (contra storage and retrieval) of spectro and mass-spectro data. I should think that your background would be especially apt to this kind of program, and I should be eager to hear more of your qualifications from Mr. Michaelson.

Meanwhile, our own plans should be forward to the point where we could make a definite statement as to the availability of a position. The general role that I would envisage would be to assist in the preparation and processing of computer programs - writing some of the simpler sub-routines, supervising the key punching, handling revisions, and checking the accuracy of the cards; in short, all of the details necessary to push programs through the computer.

The Computation Science Division here at Stanford is quite convenient to the Medical School, is very well organized and equipped, and at present is based on an IBM 7090 system, supported by a number of other smaller computers. In addition, a Burroughs 5000 computer will shortly be installed and we have some prospect of direct data links and perhaps even in time sharing utilization to allow the direct use of computation facilities effectively as part of our laboratory instrumentation.

The programming language in general use here is subalguol, a dialect of balguol, in turn derived from alguol 60. In any event, I would urge you to familiarize yourself with the balguol language as a matter of general utility in scientific programming work. The management of programs will be the responsibility of other members of the department here, and of the department of Computer Sciences, with whom we work with in close cooperation.

I am, therefore, looking forward to hearing from you and from Mr. Michaelson.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics